

**MOUNTAIN VIEW SENIOR COMMUNITY GARDEN
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(Updated May 2012)**

- **ELIGIBILITY**

The Community Garden at the Senior Center is open to seniors 55 and older who are Mountain View residents only. The waiting list is only available to Mountain View residents. Verification of address is required when signing up for a community garden and you must bring a current utility bill to prove residency. A sign-up list is maintained at the Senior Center. Generally, there is a waiting list. However, there is turnover each year. Garden plots are assigned on an availability basis from the top of the list. In the event a person cannot accept a plot at the time of availability, that person's name will remain at the top of the list for the next 6 months. After which time, if the individual does not accept the next available plot, the name will go to the bottom of the list.

Current gardeners who wish to change their gardens have the right of first refusal for any garden that becomes available. Such right will be exercised using a first-come, first-served priority. Gardeners wishing to change their gardens must notify the Senior Center in writing.

- **GARDEN RULES AND EXPECTATIONS**

The overriding policy governing the garden is to use common sense and show common courtesy toward fellow gardeners. The garden is made available to seniors by the City of Mountain View (City). Gardeners are expected to keep their plots productive and attractive at all times and in all seasons. Upon being assigned a garden plot, the gardener will be provided with the combination to the gate lock. The combination is confidential and should not be shared with anyone.

There is an annual non-negotiable, non-refundable fee set by Council collected at time of plot renewal. This fee helps cover the water usage, community garden supplies and the overall garden maintenance. Gardeners are asked to maintain the tools, hoses and frames around the plots. Trash receptacles are available for the disposal of vegetation. In return for the minimal cost of the garden, gardeners are asked to help fellow gardeners in need of assistance, and those people in need should feel free to ask for assistance.

A Garden Committee made up of gardeners exists to assist the Recreation Division to establish and enforce the minimum rules necessary to achieve the expectations and objectives noted above. The following rules for the garden have been established by the City in conjunction with the Garden Committee to meet the objectives:

1. Garden plots are assigned only by the Senior Center. A plot may NOT be assigned to another person by a gardener for any reason.
2. All structures (arbors, trellises, frames, etc.) must be approved by the Garden Committee prior to construction. In general, permissible structures are those that permit wheelbarrow passage and do not cast unwanted significant shade on another garden.
3. Any type of vegetable or flower may be planted. However, any plant that spreads roots or rhizomes (such as mint, horseradish and nettle) must be constrained to a container.
4. There is no height restriction on individual plants. However, a group of tall plants (such as corn or sunflowers) or vines that cast unwanted substantial shadow on another plot are prohibited. Consult the Garden Committee if there is a question.
5. All plants and vines must be contained within the garden frame. Nothing should be allowed to grow on the fence surrounding the general garden area.
6. Gardeners must keep both their gardens and the pathways around their plots weed and obstruction free. The responsible zone includes at least one-half the width of pathways adjacent to the garden plot.
7. No one under the age of 18 should be in the garden without an accompanying adult.
8. There is no “sharing” of garden plots and all guests, including close friends and family must be accompanied by the plot holder.
9. Pets are not allowed in the garden area.
10. In the event a gardener cannot attend to a garden for a short period of time, the gardener is expected to notify the Executive Committee of the Garden Committee with a written statement containing the of reason for absence, length of absence and if they are not applying for assistance from the Garden Committee, then the name and contact of the delegate who will temporarily oversee their garden. This absence may not exceed 3 months within a 12 month period.
11. No garbage or waste vegetation should be left in the garden area. Please use the designated trash receptacles.
12. Annual, in-person registration of gardeners at the Senior Center is required. Address and telephone numbers are to be updated at that time. Gardeners will be notified in writing of the annual registration period, which will take place in conjunction with the spring meeting of the Garden Committee. During in-person registration, proof of residency is required and the annual non-negotiable, non-refundable fee set by Council will be collected and accepted in the form of cash, check, or money order.

13. If a person from the waiting list accepts a plot after the annual registration period, the annual non-negotiable, non-refundable set fee is collected in full, and not prorated.
14. All gardeners are required to attend at least one meeting of the Garden Committee per year.

- **ENFORCEMENT**

The City has overall responsibility for ensuring that gardeners abide by the rules. The Garden Committee has day-to-day oversight responsibilities for the garden. The Senior Center will issue notices and take action when required.

Any gardener may report an infraction. Reports should be made to a member of the Executive Committee of the Garden Committee. The enforcement process will begin with an informal notice (personal, telephone or note contact as circumstances warrant) to the involved party(ies). **If this contact does not correct the situation, a formal process will proceed with the following steps:**

1. **A violation of a rule will result in a first written warning issued by the Senior Center. A first warning will allow two weeks for corrective action by the involved gardener.**
2. **If the problem has not been corrected within the two week designated time period a second written warning will be issued by the Senior Center allowing one week for corrective action.**
3. **If the corrected action is not completed within the time period designated in the second warning, the garden will be forfeited by the involved party and assigned to the next eligible person.**

Three infractions of the rules within a two-year period is cause for forfeiture of a garden.

Taking anything from another person's garden without permission is cause for immediate forfeiture of a garden.

Failure to register annually and in the time period provided or failure to attend at least one Garden Committee is cause for forfeiture of a garden.

- **GARDEN COMMITTEE**

Responsibilities in conjunction with the City staff:

1. Day-to-day oversight of the garden area to ensure the area is attractive and productive.
2. Enforcement of the rules.

3. Annual review and updating the Garden Policies and Procedures as required.

Membership:

The Garden Committee is a group of gardener peers. Anyone assigned a garden plot is automatically a member of the Garden Committee.

Structure:

The Garden Committee will be structured with a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary (officers) charged with the conduct of meetings and recording of minutes.

An Executive Committee will consist of the three (3) Garden Committee officers and eight (8) nonofficer gardeners. These eleven (11) members constitute the voting membership of the Executive Committee. The officers of the Garden Committee will serve as the officers of the Executive Committee. The Recreation Division may appoint up to two (2) staff liaisons to the Executive Committee. In conjunction with City staff, the Executive Committee will set meeting agenda and develop policies for approval by the membership and City. A minimum of five (5) members and one (1) City staff liaison must be present (a quorum) to conduct business.

Election of Officers:

Officers and Executive Committee members will be elected by the general membership once each year at a scheduled meeting.

Meetings:

The Garden Committee will meet at least quarterly to conduct the business at hand. A minimum of eleven (11) members and one (1) City staff liaison must be present (a quorum) to conduct business.

The Executive Committee will set its own meeting schedule but must meet at least annually. Executive Committee meetings are open to all gardeners. Notices of meetings will be posted on the garden gate at least three (3) days prior to a meeting.

Members may request special meetings at any time by presenting an agenda to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will determine if a general meeting is warranted.

A minimum of two weeks written notice must be provided for any meeting of the general membership.

**IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES
GARDENER RULES AND EXPECTATIONS
PARAGRAPH A.2**

The following guidelines are promulgated to improve the safety of the paths, the free passage of a wheelbarrow and nonobtrusiveness of gardens.

A. STRUCTURES

1. All structures (arbors, trellises, etc.) over fifteen inches (15") in height must be set back at least twelve inches (12") from the garden retaining wall.
2. Materials used in structures must not be larger than two inches (2") in width, thickness or diameter, except for corner anchoring posts which may be up to four inches (4") by four inches (4") in cross-section and may only extend up to fifteen inches (15") in height above the path level.
3. Gardeners are encouraged to set fifteen inch (15") high stakes in the corners of their garden to prevent hoses from being dragged across the garden.
4. All garden retaining walls/frames must be maintained. Maintenance includes replacing rotten wood, keeping the wall near vertical (not leaning out over path) and keeping the frame wall straight on all four sides.

B. PATHWAYS

Nothing may extend into/over the pathway that significantly hinders the free passage of gardeners (the Garden Executive Committee is the sole judge of what is significant).

C. VACATING A GARDEN

When a garden is vacated, please clean your area before leaving it.

D. CHANGING A GARDEN

A gardener exercising the privilege of changing gardens is responsible for removing all plants and roots from the original garden before taking possession of the new garden.

Gardeners are reminded that Paragraph A.2 states that all structures must be approved by the Garden Executive Committee prior to installation/construction.